THE LIBRARY OF TOMORROW, TODAY

NOTEWORTHY

Fall 2025
News from the University of Toronto Libraries

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NOTEWORTHY

News from the University of Toronto Libraries

University Chief Librarian
Larry P. Alford

Editor in Chief
Alison Lang

Creative Director and Design
Maureen Morin

Managing Editors
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University of Toronto Libraries Editorial Board

Julie Hannaford
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Director of Advancement

Alison Lang
Communications Writer

Maureen Morin
Graphic Designer & Publications Specialist

Larysa Woloszansky
Director of Communications

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Noteworthy
130 St. George Street
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A Message from the University Chief Librarian

Photo by Paul Terefenko

Libraries are no strangers to change. As stewards of knowledge, it's our role to help our users access information, ensure they have the most appropriate tools to do so, and teach them how to use these tools critically and responsibly.

For close to five decades, I've witnessed many such changes, from massive card catalogues to major breakthroughs in copyright agreements and digital scholarship, to AI-enabled tools that are once again transforming our ability to support teaching, learning and research.

I've also had the privilege of seeing how capably my colleagues have adapted to the rapidly changing tides of technology. While this has led to exciting evolutions in information sharing and accessibility, it has also led to challenges, including a rise of disinformation. In this new digital era, UTL continues to rise to the occasion, providing trusted and critical expertise that demonstrates libraries are more vital than ever.

This latest issue of *Noteworthy* focuses on five library staff, who together with their colleagues, are driving our growth into the future. Whether developing AI-powered search engines to find medical data, or envisioning groundbreaking new spaces for research and collaboration, each of our interview subjects brings vision, curiosity, and a deep sense of consideration to their work.

As UTL looks ahead, I also find myself reflecting on my own path. At the end of my current term on June 30, 2026, I will not be renewing my role as University Chief Librarian. I want to share my heartfelt gratitude. Over the past 15 years, it has been one of the great honours of my career to work alongside such a creative, hardworking, and dedicated library staff—colleagues who inspire me every day with their commitment to learning, discovery and service. It has also been deeply rewarding to work with so many generous donors and partners whose support and belief in our mission have made so much possible. Together, we have reimagined what a modern library can be, and I am profoundly grateful for that shared journey. UTL is ever evolving, and it will continue to set the direction for the libraries of tomorrow.

With warm regards,

Larry P. Alford
University Chief Librarian
University of Toronto Libraries

Robarts Common photo by T. Guignard

The future of libraries

UTL is in an ongoing state of adaptation and transformation. One thing that remains constant is our shared purpose: supporting students, faculty and researchers as they learn, create and innovate. The five people featured here exemplify this shared mission, and represent just a few of the many dedicated librarians and professionals across the UTL system who make discovery and learning possible for the U of T community. Their work reflects the spirit of innovation and collaboration that defines UTL: grounded in service, guided by expertise, and inspired by the people we serve.

Meet five people taking UTL into the future.

Interviews conducted by Alison Lang.
Dylanne Dearborn photo supplied. Other photos by Hanna Borodina.
Concept developed by Mimosa Kabir Ketley.

Simplifying a complex world

ERICA NEKOLAICHUK Faculty Liaison and Instruction Librarian, Gerstein Science Information Centre

In a nutshell, how would you describe your role?
I'm responsible for working with students and faculty in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, as well as some Rehabilitation Sciences departments at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine. Primarily, I support evidence-based clinical practice, focusing on knowledge synthesis—which means combining existing knowledge for a particular medical question. My work is about making the complex simple: translating how certain tools and processes work, and how they need to be reported in the literature—and what that all means for research and scholarship.

What's something that would surprise people about your work?
When I tell people that I'm a librarian, they always say: "Oh, you must love books!" While I do work in Gerstein, which has an amazing physical collection, I haven't been into the stacks in 10 years. All the information that I'm concerned with is online and electronic. I've never even worked in the milieu of print!

How does your work support students, faculty, and researchers and members of the broader community?
As an instruction librarian, I support students in professional programs such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology. It is part of their professional competencies that they know how to locate the best evidence. I meet with students one-on-one to mentor them through this process, which involves coaching about methods, transparency and scientific integrity.

Can you explain how you're teaching AI search engines to students and faculty?
At the library, we provide several tools designed to find the best evidence available to answer research questions. More recently, we're hearing that people are using ChatGPT to answer some of their clinical questions.

Obviously, this comes with a lot of risks—but at the same time, people are starting to develop protected research tools that use AI. And one of these tools is commonly known as an academic AI search engine. The role of the librarian is to support researchers in using tools carefully and thoughtfully, in ways that are methodologically sound, transparent, and rigorous.

What's a project or initiative you're proud of?
I'm proud of my work understanding AI search engines and teaching students how to use them. I remain a critical user—with the tech veneer and marketing, libraries are up against pretty strong forces. But we're used to that. Libraries have been through all of this before. As a librarian, I'm not here to dampen the excitement around these tools; I want to channel it, and help students test them and see what's happening underneath so they can be critical users.

How do you envision the future of libraries?
Libraries are become less like warehouses for books, and more like laboratories for critical thinking. And that's always been exciting. AI tools are not going anywhere. And without the support of librarians, we can't expect our researchers—who are experts in their fields—to also become experts in complex AI features, like semantic search technologies and large language models (LLMs). There's a role here for librarians to bridge that gap. And it conforms very nicely to the traditional work we've been doing forever, which is always about teaching information.

Protecting data, driving discoveries

DYLANNE DEARBORN Research Data Management Coordinator, Map and Data Library

In a nutshell, how would you describe your role?
My role focuses on coordinating and providing support for the library's research data management (RDM) services. We help researchers plan how they will handle data across a project so that it is organized, secure, and well documented, which supports the integrity of the research and strengthens the credibility of the findings. We train faculty, staff, researchers, and students on best practices in RDM and creating data management plans, support researchers in meeting journal and funding requirements related to research data, and we also administer our institutional data repository, the U of T Dataverse. In my role, I also co-lead, with the Centre for Research Innovation and Support, strategic directions and coordinated approaches for research data support across U of T units and am involved in national collaborative efforts to develop sustainable research data supports across Canada.

What's something that would surprise people about your work?
People may be surprised by the impact research data can have when it is deposited in a repository. Our most downloaded dataset has been downloaded more than 19 million times since it was deposited in 2020. When data is deposited at the end of a project, it remains available to support the published findings, and it can also be reused by other researchers and then cited, much like a journal article. Sharing data helps drive research forward by enabling new analyses and uses, reduces the cost of recreating expensive datasets, and gives researchers without major funding access to quality data for new research or training purposes. It also provides credit through authorship, which is important for students who may have contributed to the dataset but may not appear on the resulting publications.

How does your work support students, faculty, researchers and/or community members?
Supporting responsible RDM practices is especially important at a research-intensive university like the University of Toronto. We provide training and resources to help students and new researchers build and apply responsible research data practices in their projects. We also support researchers in meeting emerging expectations from funders and publishers. As part of grant applications, many funders now require a data management plan and we help researchers clarify expectations, ensure the appropriate elements and level of detail are included, and identify any gaps or inconsistencies.

What is a project or initiative you are proud of?
We are proud of U of T Dataverse, our institutional data repository for depositing, preserving, and sharing research data. It is hosted on Borealis, a shared technical infrastructure used by more than 75 Canadian institutions, with University of Toronto Libraries serving as the national service provider. Beyond helping researchers meet funder and journal expectations and making sure the data that underlies publications is available for verification and reuse, Dataverse ensures that both researchers and the university retain important and irreplaceable datasets so they remain available for study and new discoveries. Day to day, we provide training, help prepare datasets for deposits, assist with technical and automated workflows, and curate deposits to ensure the data is FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable). We are working toward enhanced security to enable the deposit

of sensitive data, solutions for large datasets, and remote storage configurations that provide linkages with campus partners.

What excites you most about the future of libraries?
It is exciting that UTL has the opportunity to ensure vital datasets are available to drive innovation and new discoveries. When deposited and shared, U of T research data can be discovered and reused by researchers across the world. By supporting our researchers with this work, the library is also supporting the shift towards recognizing data as a type of research output that can be used, cited, and included in measurements of research impact. This inspires the work we are doing to continually enhance our repository infrastructure and services and positions our RDM supports as an important institutional role into the future.

Safeguarding knowledge, amplifying research

GRAEME SLAGHT Acting Head, Scholarly Communications & Copyright Office • Scholarly Communications and Copyright Outreach Librarian

WEIJING YUAN Head, Acquisitions & Collections Services, Collection Development Department

Describe your job in a nutshell.
GRAEME: Currently I'm the acting head of the Scholarly Communications Office.

My regular role is Scholarly Communications and Copyright Outreach librarian. I help members of the University of Toronto community understand copyright, publishing, and scholarly communications, including teaching and learning and working with students. My role encompasses both the regulations and guidance we have about copyright, and I help people make the best use of their rights to publish or share their work in a way that makes sense for them.

WEIJING: My current role is leading the library's activities related to licensing for digital scholarly con-

tent across the UTL system. I work with a team of colleagues responsible for negotiating, assessing, and implementing licence agreements for digital resources, including Graeme's unit. We support open access publishing and others in the areas of preservation, along with Scholars Portal. We work to make sure licensed content and their usage rights meet the needs of the university, particularly as these needs evolve.

How does your work support students, faculty, researchers, and/or community members?

GRAEME: Faculty members come to us with a variety of questions—and quite often, they want to know if they're eligible for open access. Thanks to Weijing and her team, UTL has several newly struck open access agreements with publishers (including Elsevier, Oxford University Press, and The Company of Biologists) for researchers, so they can publish their work at minimal or no cost. Researchers want to know if they're eligible, or what journals are part of these deals, or if they can get support designing their project so it meets the guidelines of their preferred journal.

We try to help researchers avoid going down a path that might not be feasible for legal or publisher policy reasons. While I'm not a lawyer, I have learned a lot about copyright law on the job. While we do not provide legal advice, there is a certain approach a librarian can take with a legal question in a way that is informative, open, and non-judgemental. We get to be the resource to make sure there are no problems, and copyright won't implicate our researchers—or we can help them figure out who to speak with, if it does.

What exactly does "open access" mean?

WEIJING: Traditionally, scholarly content is created by scholars and users pay to access it or access via a library. Libraries purchase or license content for their users' access. When publishing their works, there is no fee to authors. In the current scholarly communication context, open access (OA) refers to content freely available to all readers, where a fee is often charged at the publishing stage. Typically authors pay this through their institutional agreements, or other means. One key benefit of OA is it breaks down paywalls that limit knowledge dissemination, especially as many argue that publicly funded research should be freely available to the public.

What other projects are you proud of?

GRAEME: Forging new open access agreements is a major achievement. We've formed an AI collections response team and that's been helpful for staying on top of things as they change so rapidly—a challenging task in a big institution! We help researchers sort out the details of how their work implicates copyright, or publisher policies. Each publisher might have their own AI policy governing various use of AI tools in the research process, for example. Our office has been around for 12 years, and we've learned how to be nimble as technology has evolved.

WEIJING: When ChatGPT was released to the public three years ago, it posed a challenge to our line of work. There was a lot of concern about using licensed content in AI tools from content owners. At the same time, many people in academia began to incorporate AI tools in their work and study. We worked with content providers to ensure licensed content can be used in secure AI tools licensed by the university, for scholarly non-commercial purposes. Our work will continue to evolve as we navigate the rapidly changing technological and legal landscape of AI.

What excites you most about the future of libraries?

WEIJING: Our mission as a research library is to support knowledge creation, dissemination, and discovery, and preserve it for future generations. And technological advances will continue to impact the way we develop our collections and services, whether it's the internet or AI. Will it even be possible for libraries to provide access to and preserve certain kinds of scholarly work in the future? And in what ways, if so?

As one example: Over the last few years, as text and data mining (TDM) became a more standard method of academic research, new terms were added to licence agreements, since our earlier agreements were written with human engagement in mind—as opposed to computational analysis or machine learning. It's a very different environment now that TDM rights are more established.

GRAEME: I agree with Weijing that the biggest challenge—and it's an exciting one—for libraries right now is the question of ownership, especially when so much content is now mediated through software, tools, and data which no longer allow us to own and steward material in the same way. The same goes for our researchers—they're not just publishing papers. They're building software; they're writing code. This is a benefit to researchers of the future. But libraries still need to determine the best way to collect this data and steward it.

The one thing to keep in mind is that, as a research institution, we have pure purposes. Our work is not commercial—it's for knowledge sharing. This intention has opened a lot of doors for us. We must be a bit more activist-minded in terms of taking advantage of the rights libraries should have. I think that's the way forward.

Driven by users, defined by design

EMILY LING Senior Manager, Capital Projects and Planning

How would you describe your role at U of T Libraries?

I oversee both the day-to-day operations and long-term planning for our central library system. On the maintenance side, that means ensuring our spaces truly work for people—from the air they breathe to the chairs they sit on. On the capital projects side, I help shape the library's future in line with the University's mandate, supporting the vision of our library leaders and users. I also stay on top of industry trends by attending conferences and exploring ideas we can realistically bring back to improve our spaces.

What's a part of your job that would surprise people?

The "building operations" part of my job often surprises people, since my role is unique on campus—elsewhere, it's split into two. For me, projects don't end when they're completed; the work continues.

When I started, the learning curve was steep, but I've really enjoyed it. I get to use two different parts of the brain: seeing projects come to life and how they impact people, while also staying connected to how spaces are actually used. For me, sustainability isn't just about creating beautiful spaces—it's about making sure they're well used and continue to serve people over time.

How does your work support students, faculty, researchers and/or community members?

In a city like Toronto, many students live away from home or commute to campus. They need somewhere to go to feel safe and comfortable, and I see libraries as providing that important third space.

As a U of T graduate, this is where I found my own identity, and I want to help others do that through our spaces. Faculty input was critical in shaping the space, especially since it supports the evolving field of digital data research. We work closely with faculty and librarians on projects to guide us on what is important in spaces, since they know their users and what tools are most useful, which creates a vital balance in how we design and plan.

What is a project or initiative you're proud of?

Everything! The great thing about my role is that people come to me when there's an issue to solve, and it's always about making improvements. Whether it's a large renovation or something smaller like replacing very dated furniture in the cafeteria, getting those details right takes time and care.

The fourth and fifth floor renovations at Robarts Library were driven by the digitization of collections, transforming storage-heavy areas into vibrant spaces that give back to students—places not just to study, but to connect, recharge and thrive. I'm proud to contribute to projects like this that show our ability to evolve.

What excites you most about the future of libraries?

At a conference, I saw examples of libraries around the world from Japan to Europe that felt like "information playgrounds" offering everything from sleeping pods to nursing rooms. I want to envision a future of libraries like this. While we may have limits in how far we can realistically transform our spaces, our ultimate goal is to create environments that support and care for our users in every way possible. It's striking a balance: recognizing how people access knowledge and research, while also understanding that design shapes how a space truly functions. At its heart, this work is about ideas and imagination, and about moving forward together in partnership.

Knowledge in community, culture and care

A world-renowned forum for Indigenous librarianship comes to UTL

This June, I had the opportunity to attend the 13th annual International Indigenous Librarians' Forum (IILF), hosted for the first time in Tkaronto (Toronto) at U of T Libraries. As a first-year Indigenous Master of Library and Information Science student, I had never attended a professional conference or forum before and didn't know what to expect. It quickly became clear that IILF wasn't just an academic forum but a gathering of friends, family and community, brought together by a shared sense of purpose.

IILF was founded in 1999 by Te Rōpū Whakahau, a national group of Māori library and cultural professionals in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It has since become an international event held every two years in a different host country, gathering Indigenous librarians, archivists, and cultural workers from around the globe.

This year's conference at U of T was supported by Steering Committee Co-chairs Mikayla Redden and Cora Coady, Desmond Wong from the local Steering Committee, and cultural advisors Bonnie Jane Maracle and Dr. Debby Wilson Danard, as well as members of the nation-wide Steering Committee representing libraries across the country.

The theme of the forum was "Dish with One Spoon/Our Dish," inspired by the important teachings and treaty between the Anishinaabeg and Haudeno-

Photos by Kate Dalton

saunee peoples. This message of shared responsibility and mutual respect was carried through the presentations and conversations throughout the week.

This year's forum began with a Day on the Land at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. We walked the beautiful Valley Land Trail, took part in ceremony led by local Elders and welcomed the Mauri Stone. This stone, carved and blessed by Māori Elders, carries the life force of the forum and is brought to the host nations by the Māori as a symbol of continuity. Afterwards we shared a community meal.

A standout session that I attended was put on by the Santa Clara Pueblo Community Library in New Mexico. Rather than simply describing their work, they invited us to join in, using play and laughter to show us the kinds of games and activities they utilize in their programming. The session wasn't all fun and games though; they also shared the impact of initiatives such as their "Learn to Act" program. Through writing and performing monologues, participants explored new career paths and, as a result, experienced a growth in their literacy skills.

Kanaka Maoli representatives from Hawai'i presented a report with contributions from over 40 Indigenous communities worldwide. Drawing on these experiences, it highlighted the unique challenges communities face and offered actionable steps for improvement, including cultural competency training, intentional collections management and the importance of language preservation.

By the end of the week, I left feeling incredibly inspired, not only about my future as a public librarian, but about the possibilities that emerge when Indigenous voices lead the way in shaping library policy and spaces. I was reminded that knowledge lives not just in books or databases, but in place, practice, and relationships.

By Rosie Sadoquis

Facing page: Student Rosie Sadoquis (left) explores the Valley Land Trail at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus for the Day of the Land. This page, left to right: Dr. Debby Wilson Danard, the conference's Anishinaabeg Elder and cultural consultant, and her firekeeper Sam Zekany-Hyer address conference participants on the Day of the Land for the 2025 International Indigenous Librarians' Forum (IILF). Bonnie Jane Maracle, the conference's Haudenosaunee Elder and cultural consultant, doing teachings on the medicines on the table.

A legacy of knowledge

Celebrating 70 Years of Rare Books and Special Collections

Since 1955, the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC) has connected people with Canada's largest holdings of rare books. Its 70th anniversary is being marked by an exhibition at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library titled *70: Rare Books, Special Collections, Archives*.

The exhibition looks back at the history of the collection while showing how these items can still spark discovery, creativity, and learning. Organized by RBSC Head David Fernández, with contributions from RBSC staff, the display features seventy items recently used in teaching and research. Fernández explains that each of these items carries a story. For instance, the oldest item, a 1789 BCE clay tablet, records a receipt for houses and goats, sparking questions about what counts as a "book", and how different cultures record knowledge. As Fernández puts it, "It's not just the item—it's the story it tells."

The exhibition highlights the concept of bibliodiversity, defined as the many ways knowledge takes form in books. Palm leaf manuscripts, 16th-century pamphlets, posters, notebooks, and archives illustrate the global and creative nature of the book.

The diversity of materials also resonates with students. Camila Walls Castillo is a Master of Information candidate with the Faculty of Information. "Vázquez Mejías's woodblocks challenged my ideas of traditional bibliography and reshaped my understanding of what a book can be," she says. "Here were not just printing tools, but also the first pages of the Puerto Rican War novelette itself! Not only did this collection help introduce me to the vibrant and radical creativity of modern Latin American artists' books, but additionally it demonstrated to me that books should not be understood as fixed forms; rather, they are material experiments in the pursuit of storytelling, history, and art."

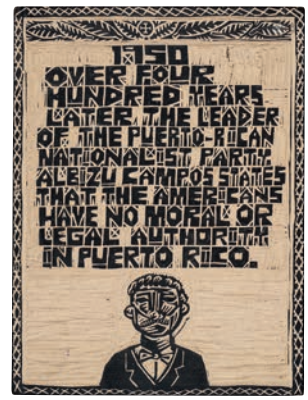
David says that exhibitions "bring life to the library," which, like a living organism, thrives on connections. These connections extend into the future, too. The department's U of T-developed Ethiopic Optical Character Recognition (OCR) tool scans ancient script, making rare languages more accessible and showing how special collections stay relevant in the digital age.

This exhibition reminds the community that the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library is open to all. Though special collections are often seen as exclusive, the Fisher has always welcomed everyone. The work that happens here goes beyond preservation; these collections are here to be used, explored, and shared.

Seventy years on, RBSC remains at the juncture where the past meets the present and shapes the future. The exhibition reaffirms the Fisher as a public space, where stories connect us and knowledge grows.

*70: Rare Books, Special Collections, Archive*s runs until December 23, 2025 at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. It is free and open to the public.

By Anya Chugh and Mimosa Kabir Ketley



Curator's picks

(clockwise from facing page)

Printing Blocks by John Vazquez Mejías (Puerto Rican artist and writer)

Part of a larger collection, these blocks showcase Mejías's diverse work, spanning graphic novels and puppet shows. It captures the intersection of art, storytelling, and social commentary.

Techialoyan codice (Indigenous manuscript from present-day Mexico)

Purchased in 2022, this manuscript represents the struggle of a central Mexican community during the colonial period. Created when their land was threatened by Spanish settlers, it holds cultural and historical value, reflecting resilience and knowledge. It is both a historical artifact and an example of how the library fosters connections with Indigenous communities today.

The Man of Pleasures Pocket Book (Brothel Guide, London, 1859)

This rare 19th-century brothel guide is a valuable resource for courses on sex work and is frequently used in research on cultural and printing history.

> “It is incredibly affirming to see this project come full circle,” says EAL Director Hana Kim. “This exhibition reflects a longer arc of resilience and creativity, marking five years since the idea was first brought to the library. Through this project, students have engaged in hands-on experiential learning, working directly with our special collection and shaping an exhibition that brings scholarship to life. This exhibition truly exemplifies what can be achieved when the library and academic departments collaborate.”

Masterpieces reimagined

The EAL and East Asian Studies students bring Chinese reproductions to life

When it comes to art history, the act of making facsimiles is nearly as old as the history of images itself. In pre-modern China, the practice was revered and used as a critical tool for teaching and learning. A considerable number of these reproductions, including paintings, calligraphy, scrolls, and woodblock printed books, are part of the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library (EAL)’s holdings and offer rich opportunities for research, classroom learning, and public programs in East Asian art, history, and culture.

U of T Department of Art History Associate Professor Dr. Jennifer Purtle previously worked with the EAL using this remarkable collection. She wanted to go a step further and build a class around the materials.

“Part of the impetus was, how do we get students working with our remarkable collections here at the libraries, and get them the hands-on training that would support them in the job market—from handling scrolls to mounting materials properly?” Dr. Purtle says.

In 2020, Dr. Purtle got her wish with a course entitled *Exhibiting China*. The first group of students came on board and started working with the collection: taking notes, discussing the historical context of the items, and learning how to properly handle them. Then in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, and the class, along with the rest of the world, shut down.

However, *Exhibiting China* persevered. Once in-person classes resumed at U of T, a new group of eager students enrolled in the course in winter 2023 to pick up the curatorial work. The scope of the class itself slowly began to change; it became clear that each cohort was taking on a different part of conceiving and curating the final exhibition, rather than doing everything in a single term.

In 2025, the class’s third iteration took the project to the finish line. Led by East Asian Studies PhD candidate Rose Ting-Yi Liu, the group went through the work prepared by the previous two classes to solidify

themes, make updates and take over the planning and mounting of the final exhibition, titled *Chinese Art Masterpieces in Print: History, Lineage, Legacy*.

The final result is a beautifully mounted and thoughtfully displayed selection of works—from handscrolls to woodblock prints—arranged around the study tables in the EAL's brightly-lit space. Each item was chosen to appeal to a broad audience, with students writing thoughtful descriptions for visitors seeking further information.

Happily, future U of T students will be able to experience *Exhibiting China*—Dr. Purtle says a new incarnation of the course is being devised as we speak. She hopes that the success of *Exhibiting China* will continue to drive future collaborations between libraries and students and teach skills to get them jobs.

"The best thing about it is getting students to handle these wonderful materials and get them on the wall and it's produced employment for students," Dr. Purtle says. "That's fantastic. That's the most joyful part of all of it."

Chinese Art Masterpieces in Print: History, Lineage, Legacy will be on display at the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library until December 23, 2025.

By Alison Lang

Above: Students in the 2020 cohort of the *Exhibiting China* class learn to handle precious reproductions and rare materials.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT
Gu Shi Huapu

"One of my favourite pieces from the collection is the rare book, the Gu Shi Huapu [Mr. Gu's Painting Album/Famous Painters through the Dynasties]. It's a woodblock print, and it's a centrepiece for this copying tradition in pre-modern China. It gathers 106 painters ranging from the Eastern Jin dynasty (31–420 CE) to the Wanli period of the Ming dynasty (1573–1620) and was made available through the efforts of many people—collectors, artists, dealers, and local officials. It's amazing that our library has a copy from the Ming Dynasty, from the 1600s".

▶ *Exhibiting China* instructor and postdoctoral candidate in East Asian Studies, Rose Ting-Yi Liu

IN CONVERSATION WITH TRADITION
An *Exhibiting China* student reflects on the final exhibition

"My fondest memory of this journey was writing and editing the object labels and catalogue essays. In just a few hundred words, we had to introduce the artist, subject matter, and other important aspects such as style, artistic lineage, technique, and iconography. Just as generations of facsimile artists modelled themselves after the old masters, we, as students of art history, are deriving our own "style" from the writings of the art historians who came before us. I feel fortunate to have taken part in *Exhibiting China*, made possible by amazing instructors and incredible library resources, learning and writing about one of the oldest continuous artistic traditions."

▶ Cheng Gong is a 4th-year undergraduate student in East Asian Studies and was part of the 2025 cohort for *Exhibiting China*.

Photo by Geoffrey Vendeville

Spring events at the Fisher Library

The 2025 John Seltzer and Mark Seltzer Memorial Lecture

In late April 2025, guests packed the Thomas Fisher Rare Book to hear this year's John Seltzer and Mark Seltzer Memorial Lecture, delivered by professional engineer, longtime Friend of the Fisher, and ardent rare book collector Mark Andrews.

For his talk "Engineering a Book Collection," Andrews chose not to focus on the entirety of his collection of 7,000 books related to engineering. Instead he focused on the story of four of these books and how they came to be in the collection.

Topics included works by Galileo Galilei, Carlo Pagnani, and Sandford Fleming, as well as finely drawn diagrams from each of the texts. Andrews also explored the relationships between each of the texts, their authors, and thematic similarities.

Andrews' lecture marked another successful instalment in a series that is equally intellectual, good humoured and esoteric, leaving attendees with much to consider. Mrs. R. Dorene Seltzer generously endowed this annual lecture.

By Alison Lang

The World Tipitaka 2016 presentation and ceremony at UTL

In early June, a group of delegates from Thailand and the Thai Embassy in Ottawa visited the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library to host the presentation of the World Tipitaka Saj-jha-ya Phonetic Recitation, King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit Commemorative 2016 Editions.

This collaboration project between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and the World Tipitaka Foundation aims to donate the special Tipitaka Editions to overseas libraries, institutions and organizations in more than 36 countries, including Canada. It reflects the foundational teachings of Buddhism as well as the original pronunciations and recitation of the Pāli text from the time of the Buddha, over 2,500 years ago.

The 2016 edition, an 80-volume collection, was generously presented to UTL in a beautiful handover ceremony. This gift will help UTL fuel the ongoing cultural engagement and discourse that is so vital to U of T's academic community.

By Alison Lang

Photos by Paul Terefenko

Left: Mark Andrews (centre) with Monique Seltzer and Gareth Seltzer. Right: Thanpuying Varaporn Pramoj Na Ayudhaya, President of the World Tipitaka Foundation (left), and Assistant Professor Dr. Penphan Thipkong, Patron of the World Tipitaka Foundation.

Meet Apollonia, the patron saint of toothaches

Photo by Alison Lang

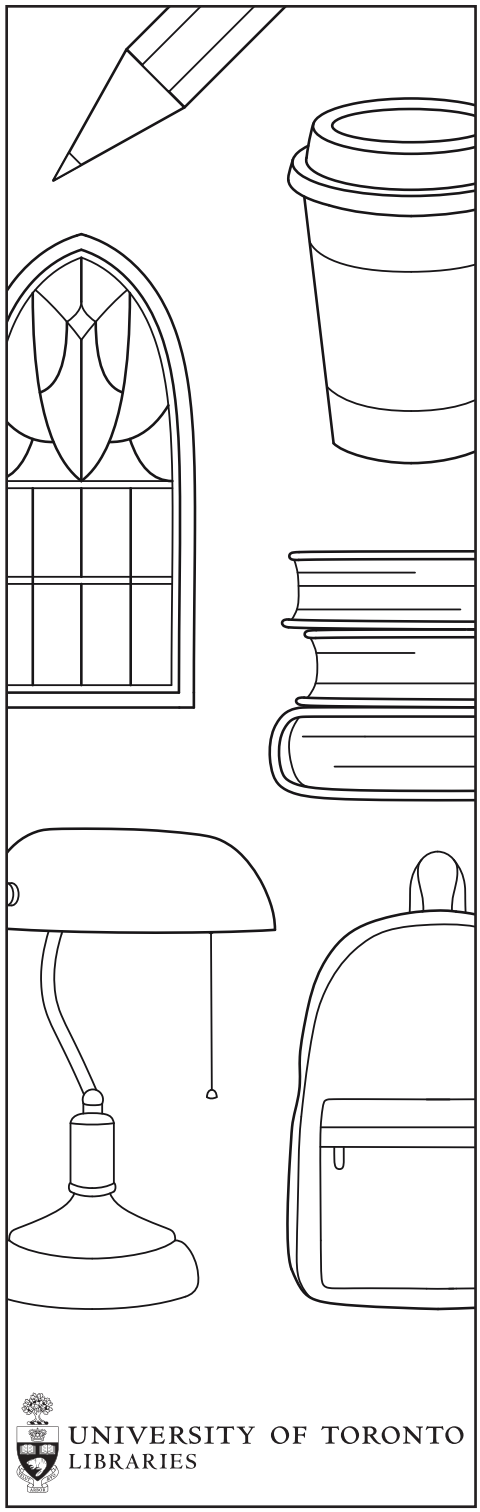
The Dental Library of the University of Toronto and the Harry R. Abbott Memorial Library (commonly known as the Dentistry Library) at UTL has enjoyed a long and storied history. As the oldest dentistry library in Canada at a spry 128 years old, it has experienced tremendous growth and transformation, most recently in its bright, beautiful space on Edward Street in downtown Toronto.

If you wander into the group study areas at the back of the space, you'll encounter a popular piece of library lore: a stained-glass window depicting Saint Apollonia of Alexandria, patron saint of all who suffer from toothache, serenely watching over groups of dentistry students each academic year.

Saint Apollonia made her first appearance in the library in 1985, unveiled by Dr. Marjorie Jackson. The window was created to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the admission of women to the University of Toronto and was funded by a group of women in dental professions or associated with dentistry. Apollonia herself was designed in the likeness of Caroline Louise Josephine Wells, the first professionally qualified female dentist in Ontario and a graduate of Trinity College.

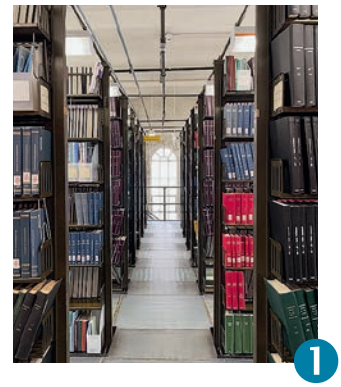
Saint Apollonia is both a charming testament to the playful humour of the Faculty of Dentistry and a moving tribute to its many female graduates who have gone on to elevate the profession in Canada and beyond.

By Alison Lang



Take a quiet moment for creativity. Colour the bookmark, cut it out, and keep it with your next great read.

Guess the library!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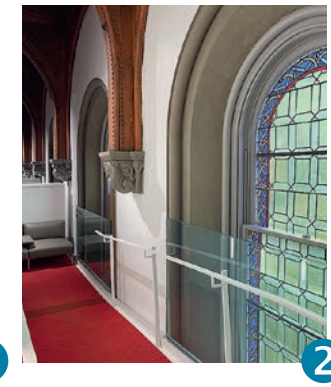
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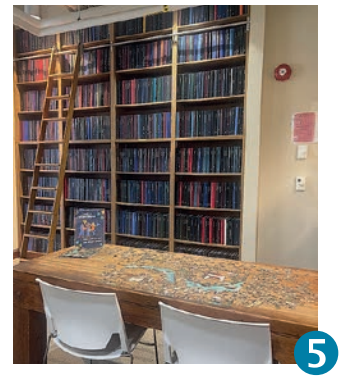
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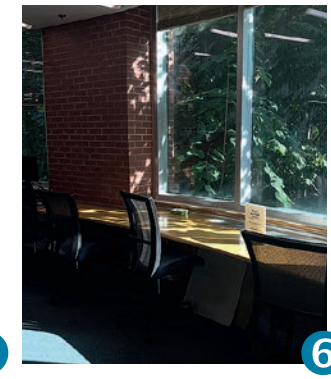
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Can you identify the UTL library or study space in these photos? Write your guesses below each photo, then check the inverted answers at the bottom of the page.

This page was designed by U of T students Anya Chugh and Liza Nikolaenko.
Page compiled by Anya Chugh.
Bookmark designed by Liza Nikolaenko.

(1) Gerstein Science Information Centre (2) University College Library (3) The Dental Library of the University of Toronto and the Harry R. Abbott Memorial Library (4) Music Library (5) A. D. Allen Chemistry Library (6) Noranda Earth Sciences Library

2024/25

IMPACT REPORT

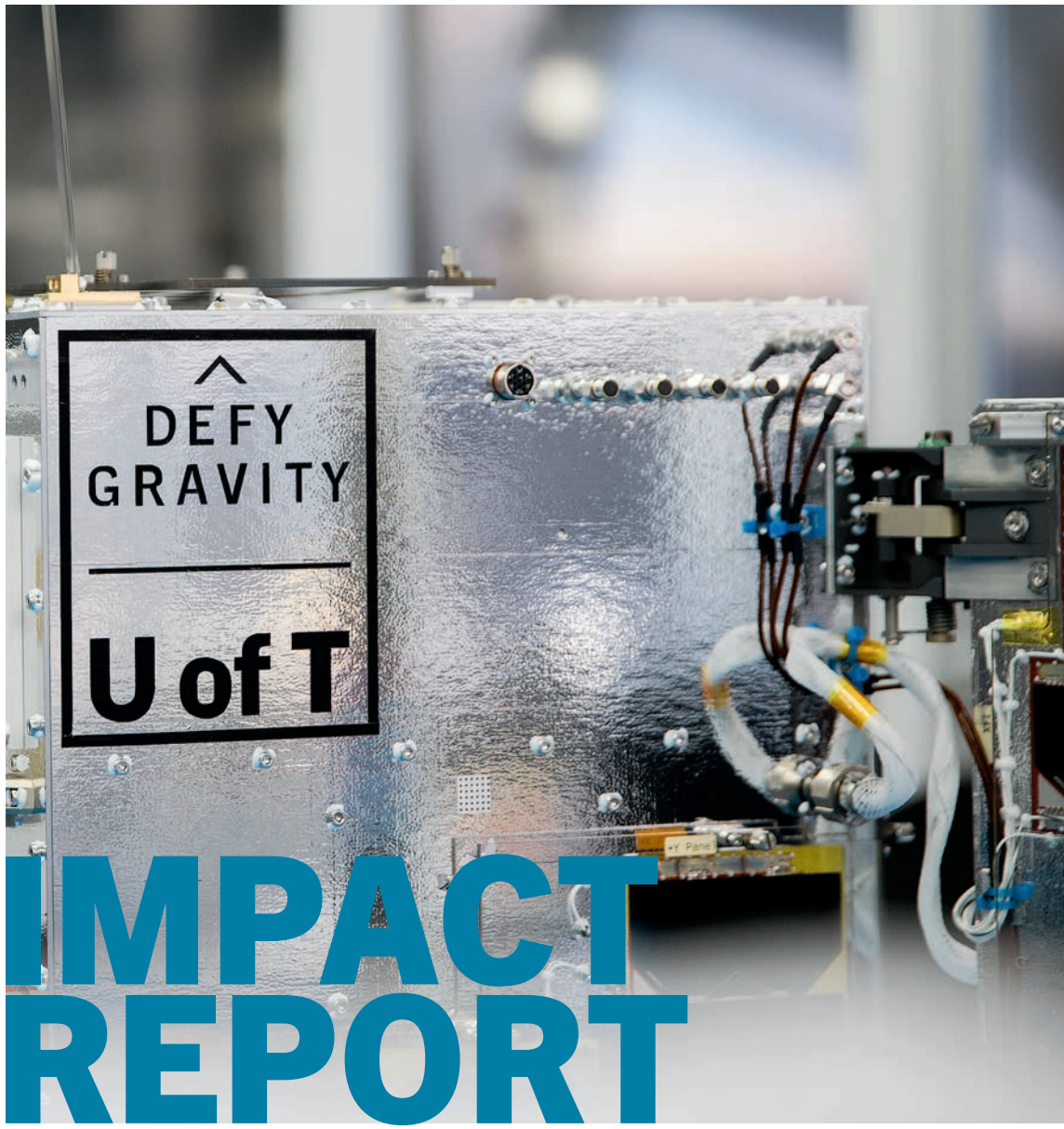

Photo by Matthew Volpe

This year's report provides a snapshot of the University of Toronto Libraries' system-wide impact, highlighting key data and updates. With the support of our partners, UTL continues to advance research, teaching, and learning across the university.

Challenge accepted: Preparing our libraries for the future

As the university transforms to meet new opportunities and challenges, U of T Libraries continues to lead with vision and through partnership across our community. From innovative programs that support student balance and well-being to investments in sustainable infrastructure and cutting-edge research, this year's report highlights how our libraries are shaping the future of learning and scholarship — fostering a culture of research and discovery, and working with faculty to bring new ideas and technologies to life.

We are proud of programs that support student well-being and academic success. Initiatives such as *Pick Up and Play*, providing access to sports equipment on front campus, therapy dogs in our spaces, and collaborations with Student Life like *Night Against Procrastination* help students find motivation, manage their workload, de-stress, and connect with peers as they prepare for academic challenges.

Our spaces are transforming to meet the evolving needs of our community. The Music Library was recently refreshed, and renovation work is underway on the Map & Data Library to create more welcoming, student-centred learning environments. At the Downsview facility, an ambitious expansion is paired with deep sustainability commitments. In partnership with U of T's Sustainability Office, extensive decarbonization measures are being implemented, positioning UTL at Downsview to become the university's first climate-positive facility.

Our research and innovation activities continue to inspire, powered by the generosity of donors. The Old Books, New Science Lab is uncovering hidden stories in rare texts and sharing expertise with libraries worldwide. UTL also played a leading role as a founding member of the university's AI Task Force, helping to shape a vision for how artificial intelligence can support teaching, learning, and research in alignment with our values.

As we enter a new digital era, we're also contending with new challenges, including a rising tide of disinformation. In times like these, UTL's services are more vital than ever, and we're rising to the occasion, providing trusted guidance and teaching information literacy to help our users navigate this rapidly changing landscape.

At the heart of every success story is our community of supporters. This year, libraries participated in U of T Giving Day, with David Fernández, Head of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, serving as a returning ambassador. As David reminds us, "Libraries aren't just where books reside. They're where communities are built."

Community is at the heart of our mission — and with your continued support, we will advance research, support students, and create inclusive spaces that enrich the life of the university for generations to come.

Larry P. Alford
University Chief Librarian
University of Toronto Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARIES

DEFY GRAVITY

UTL by the numbers:
Impact on our community

#1
research library system in Canada

Top 3
in North America (Association of Research Libraries)

4 million
books housed and managed at our Downsview facility

16.7 million
electronic and print volumes in 341 languages

61,000+
reference questions answered across all libraries this year (61,382)

100,000 hours
spent online — equal to 11 years of students, researchers & faculty exploring our website

13.5 million+
journal article downloads from UTL's eresource collections this year

3.7 million
electronic books available anytime, anywhere

Supporting
100K students
across the tri-campus system

& 16.5K faculty

2.4 million
unique users visit the U of T Libraries website each year

11.4 million
annual searches in the library catalogue

637 donors
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U of T ranks
top 50
globally in 46 subjects — more than any university in the world

U of T is
3rd in the world
for research citations — after Harvard and University of Chinese Academy of Sciences

Now in its ninth year, the Wilson Prize recognizes six outstanding undergraduate researchers annually, with winners selected from across all three campuses. Each receives a $1,000 award in recognition of their exceptional work and commitment to research excellence.

Research in action

How the Wilson Prize highlights UTL's role in student success

Each year, the Patricia and Peter Shannon Wilson Undergraduate Research Prize recognizes exceptional undergraduates who demonstrate curiosity, critical thinking, and a mastery of research skills—developed through the resources, collections, and expertise of U of T Libraries.

Behind every winning project is a journey of discovery that begins in the stacks, databases, and archives. Along the way, students learn to navigate complex information landscapes, evaluate sources with confidence, and transform their questions into original research that deepens understanding of real-world issues. Through workshops, one-on-one consultations, and access to specialized collections, UTL librarians help students turn their ideas into original research that stands out among their peers.

"This project opened my eyes to the world of U of T's library resources, which provide truly astounding amounts of information on every subject under the sun," says winner Sasha Adamova from the Faculty of Arts & Science. "It is incredibly validating as a first-year student to have my ideas recognized, and it encourages me to continue developing my research and critical thinking through the rest of my undergraduate journey."

For winner William Kilbride, the recognition was particularly meaningful as a student casual employee at UTL. "My undergraduate experience has been indelibly marked by the access that it has provided me to collections and services that are unparalleled in Canada (and among the greatest in the world)," he says. "I find it incredibly fulfilling, inspiring, and heartening to have

received this recognition as a seeker and producer of information from the contest's board of reviewers."

Winner Bavan Pushpalingam's project began as an investigation into food insecurity and became a deeper inquiry into the politics of visibility, belonging and justice for a marginalized Tamil community in Sri Lanka. "Receiving the Patricia and Peter Shannon Wilson Undergraduate Research Prize is an honour and a responsibility," says Bavan Pushpalingam. "It affirms that research grounded in care, relationship and accountability belongs within academic spaces."

Since its founding, the Wilson Prize has helped launch students toward remarkable achievements. Notably, 2022 recipient Sapolnach Prompiengchai went on to receive a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University in 2023, exemplifying how the research, mentorship, and scholarly curiosity nurtured through U of T Libraries can open doors to global opportunity.

The prize is made possible through the generosity of Peter and Patricia Shannon Wilson, whose endowment honours Patricia's deep belief in education and her enduring connection to the University of Toronto and its libraries. As her son Peter explains, "My mother has always valued the importance of education and the opportunities it provides to broaden minds… She believes this award enables a new generation to hone their research skills and provide a path for their future success." This kind of learning begins in the library and lasts a lifetime.

With the Wilsons' support, and the mentorship of UTL librarians, students have developed the confidence, research acumen, and intellectual curiosity that will guide them through graduate studies, professional pursuits, and lifelong learning. Every great research journey begins with a question—and often, a librarian.

By Larysa Woloszansky

Photo by Hanna Borodina

The 2025 Patricia and Peter Shannon Wilson Undergraduate Research Prize winners, from left: Sasha Adamova, Vivian Zhi, Kimberley Ng, William Kilbride. Not pictured: Bavan Pushpalingam and Constantine Matthaios. The winners are posing with University Chief Librarian Larry Alford and Vice-President and Provost Trevor Young.

Teaching in 3D

Faculty collaboration with UTL

U of T Libraries has always maintained close relationships with faculty, supporting teaching, research, and scholarship across every discipline. Today, those partnerships are evolving in exciting new ways. Entrepreneurship Librarian Carey Toane exemplifies this kind of forward-thinking collaboration. By combining subject expertise with emerging technologies, Carey and colleagues help faculty design hands-on experiences that bridge theory and practice in powerful new ways.

For example, Dr. Judi Laprade, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, in the Division of Anatomy at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, worked with Carey and staff at the Gerstein Science and Information Centre and the MADLab 3D printing service to create a modular brain model. The printed model consists of separate horizontal, coronal, and sagittal sections that students can assemble, disassemble, and explore with pipe cleaners to visualize internal structures in three dimensions. "It's impossible for me to bring bones or specimens into the lecture theatre, and it's important to have hands-on models in lab as well that students can explore to support their understanding and reinforce what they've learned," Dr. Laprade explains. "I would not have access to a 3D printer otherwise, nor do I have the time or expertise to learn about the technology myself, so having the support and expertise of the Gerstein + MADLab 3D printing service has been essential."

Photo by Carey Toane

Similarly, in the Faculty of Dentistry, Dr. Trevor Thang partnered with Carey and the Gerstein 3D printing team to develop multi-material jaw models with realistic radiographic properties. "Working with the Gerstein 3D printing service has been invaluable as I develop a pipeline for creating radiographic anatomy phantoms," says Dr. Thang. "Having access to the technology and the guidance of an experienced team has helped me navigate the learning curve and set a strong foundation for advancing this teaching tool."

As technology evolves, UTL staff will continue to expand their impact—helping faculty create engaging, practical, and innovative learning experiences for the next generation.

By Larysa Woloszansky

Above: Dr. Judi Laprade with a model of a brain.

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With your generosity, UTL strengthens the foundation of learning, discovery, and innovation at the University of Toronto. We gratefully acknowledge the individuals and organizations whose contributions of $500 or more have made a lasting difference. **Thank you.**

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Together, we make it possible.

What does it take to keep a library system like ours moving forward?

At the University of Toronto Libraries, progress is never a solo effort. It is a shared achievement made possible by a community that believes in the power of knowledge.

Every new space, every digitized collection, every preserved archive and innovative service begins with collaboration: between librarians and students, donors and staff, faculty and researchers. We build together, guided by a collective belief that access to information transforms lives.

Because of donor generosity, UTL continues to expand its digital collections, enhance preservation efforts, and modernize study spaces that empower the next generation of scholars. Your support fuels the work of librarians who teach students how to find and evaluate information, develop digital tools for discovery, and protect knowledge for the future.

As we reflect on this year's accomplishments, one message stands out: we cannot do it alone. Every achievement, from new partnerships and technologies to the moments of discovery that happen quietly in our libraries every day, is made possible by those who believe in our mission.

To all our supporters, partners, and friends: thank you for making this work possible. Together, we are building libraries that not only preserve knowledge, but also shape the future of how this knowledge is discovered and shared.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about supporting the University of Toronto Libraries, please contact Mimosa Kabir Ketley at **mimosa.kabir@utoronto.ca**.

Thank you for your generosity, partnership, and belief in the power of libraries.

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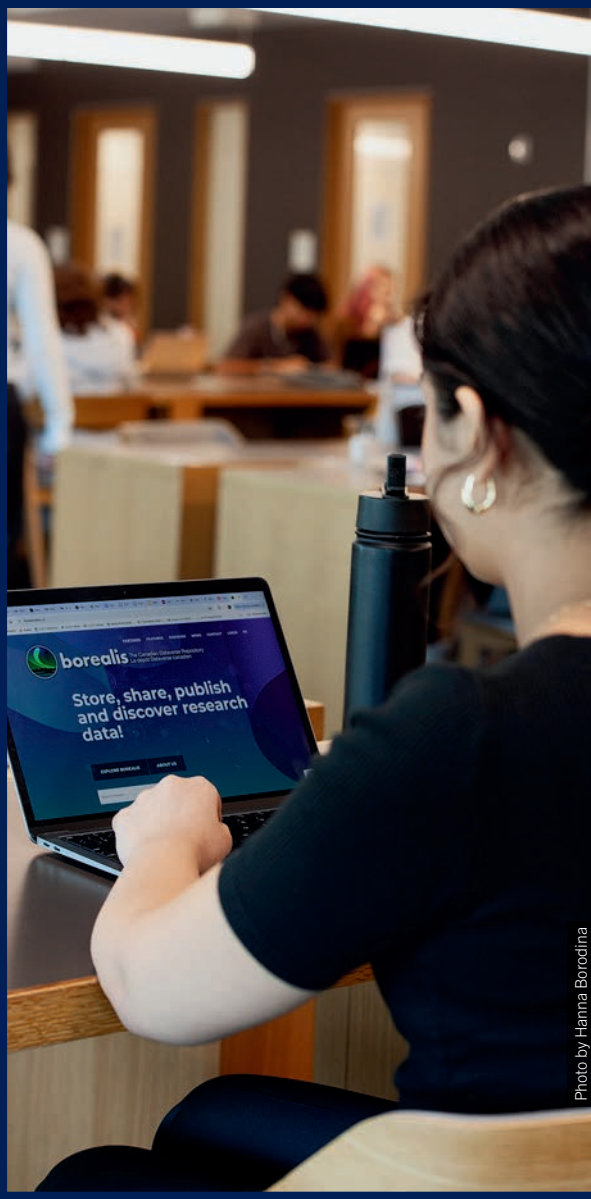

Photo by Hanna Borodina

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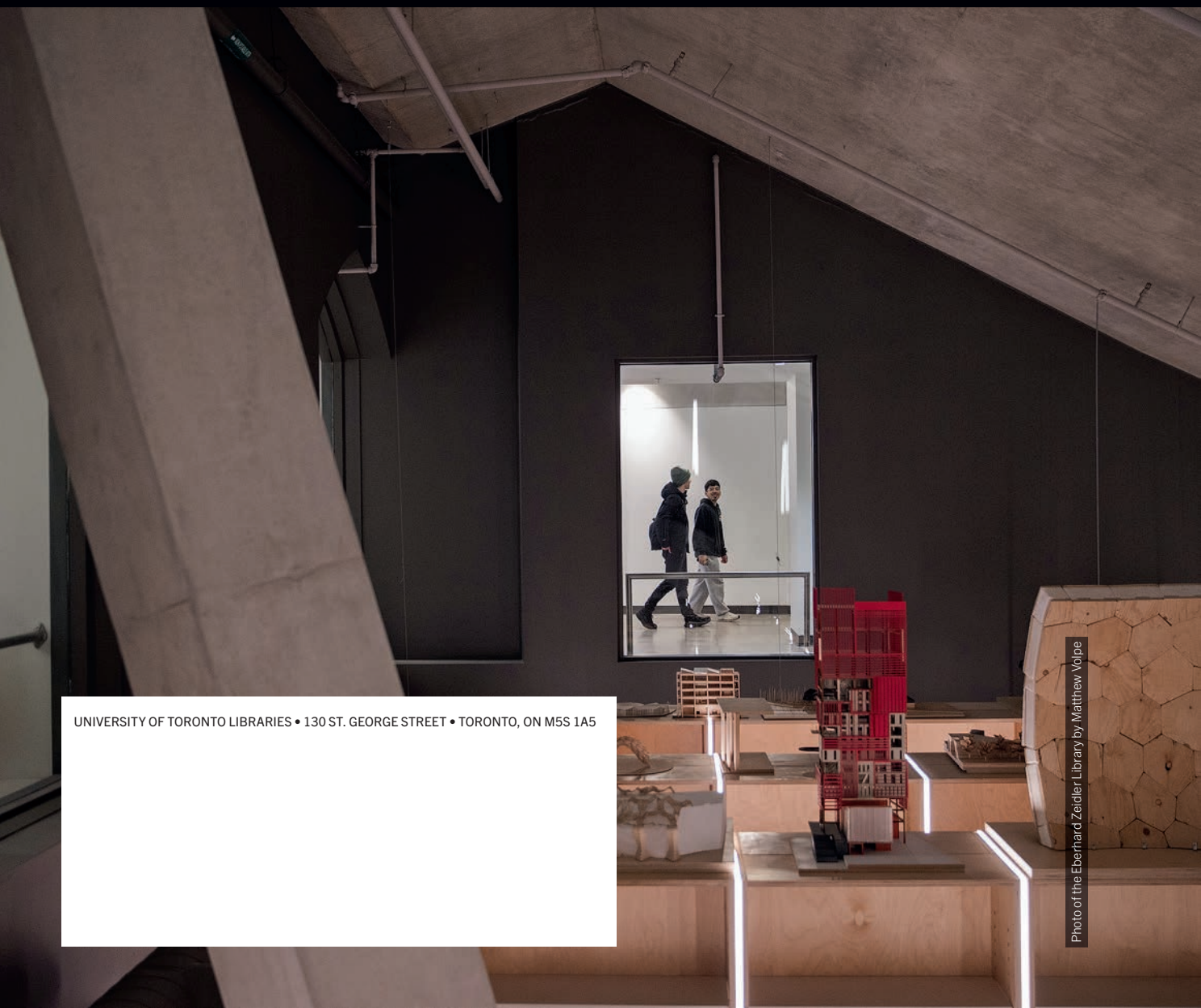

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Photo of the Eberhard Zeidler Library by Matthew Volpe